IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

1-31. (Canceled)

32. (Previously Presented) An apparatus, comprising:

first and second electrodes for disposition near the heart;

an implantable pulse generator including pulse generator circuitry for delivering a defibrillation shock pulse to the heart;

a conductive pulse generator housing enclosing the pulse generator circuitry;

a programmable switch for connecting the first and second electrodes and the conductive housing to the pulse generator circuitry, wherein the switch is configurable so that a shock pulse is either discharged between the first electrode and the second electrode or discharged between the first electrode and the second electrode connected in common with the conductive housing.

33. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 32 wherein the second electrode is a subcutaneous electrode.

34. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 33 wherein the subcutaneous electrode is a conductive mesh connected to the pulse generator housing.

35. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 33 wherein the subcutaneous electrode is a helical coil ~~for encircling~~ which encircles the pulse generator housing.

36. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 33 wherein the subcutaneous electrode is a plurality of coiled segment electrodes.

37. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 32 further comprising a third electrode and wherein the switch is configurable so that a shock pulse is discharged from the first electrode connected in common with the third electrode to the second electrode connected in common with the conductive housing.

38. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 32 wherein the pulse generator housing includes one or more conductive regions isolated by insulating material.

39. (Previously Presented) An apparatus, comprising:

first and second electrodes for disposition near the heart;

an implantable pulse generator including pulse generator circuitry for delivering a defibrillation shock pulse to the heart;

a conductive pulse generator housing enclosing the pulse generator circuitry;

a programmable switch for connecting the first and second electrodes and the conductive housing to the pulse generator circuitry, wherein the switch is configurable so that a shock pulse is either discharged between the first electrode and the conductive housing or discharged between the second electrode and the conductive housing.

40. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 39 wherein the first and second electrodes are proximal and distal electrodes incorporated into a single lead.

41. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 39 further comprising a third electrode and wherein the switch is configurable so that a shock pulse is discharged from the first electrode connected in common with the third electrode to the second electrode connected in common with the conductive housing.

42. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 39 wherein the pulse generator housing includes one or more conductive regions isolated by insulating material.

43. (Previously Presented) A method comprising:

configuring a programmable switch so that a shock pulse is delivered either between a first electrode and a conductive housing enclosing pulse generator circuitry or between a second electrode and the conductive housing;

sensing cardiac activity in order to detect an arrhythmia; and,

upon detection of an arrhythmia, discharging a defibrillation shock pulse between the conductive pulse generator housing and either the first or second electrodes according to the configuration of the programmable switch.

44. (Previously Presented) A method comprising:

sensing cardiac activity in order to detect an arrhythmia; and,

upon detection of an arrhythmia, discharging a defibrillation shock pulse between a first ventricular electrode and a second electrode disposed in the superior vena cava and connected in common with a conductive pulse generator housing.

45. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 44 further comprising configuring a programmable switch so that the defibrillation shock pulse is delivered between the first ventricular electrode and the second electrode disposed in the superior vena cava and connected in common with a conductive pulse generator housing.

46. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 44 further comprising delivering a lower energy defibrillation shock and, if the arrhythmia is not terminated, delivering a higher energy defibrillation shock.

47. (Previously Presented) A method comprising:

sensing cardiac activity in order to detect an arrhythmia; and,

upon detection of an arrhythmia, discharging a defibrillation shock pulse between a first ventricular electrode and a second electrode disposed subcutaneously and connected in common with a conductive pulse generator housing.

48. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 47 wherein the defibrillation shock pulse is discharged between the first ventricular electrode connected in common with a third electrode disposed in the superior vena cava and the second electrode connected in common with the housing.

49. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 47 further comprising delivering a lower energy defibrillation shock and, if the arrhythmia is not terminated, delivering a higher energy defibrillation shock.

50. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 47 further comprising configuring a programmable switch so that the defibrillation shock pulse is delivered between the first ventricular electrode and the second electrode disposed subcutaneously and connected in common with a conductive pulse generator housing.

51. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 48 further comprising configuring a programmable switch so that the defibrillation shock pulse is delivered between the first ventricular electrode connected in common with a third electrode disposed in the superior vena cava and the second electrode connected in common with the housing.